

MBTA COMMUNITIES

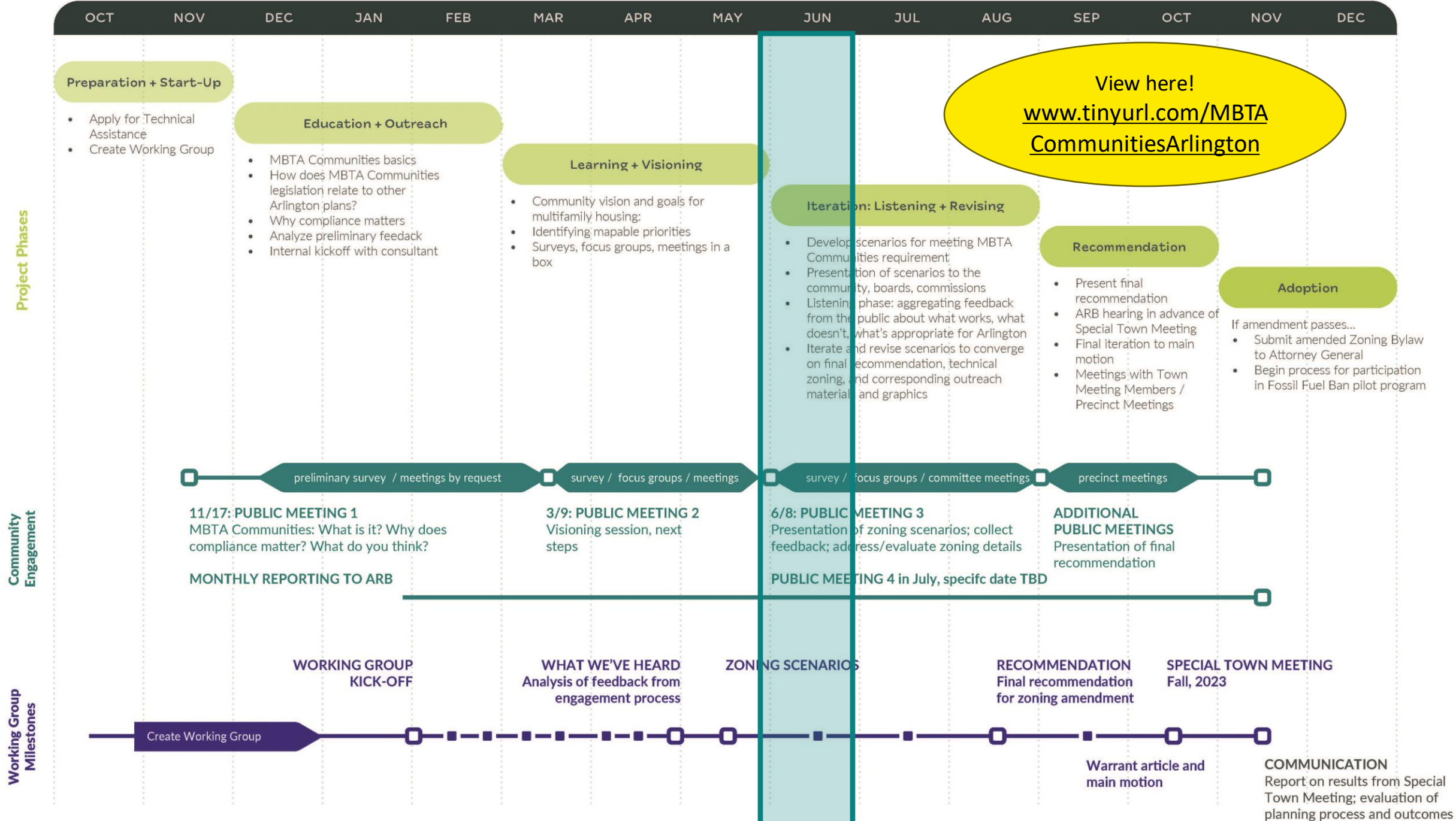
ZONING FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON

6/8/23

Public Meeting 3: Presentation & Discussion of Draft Map

Town of Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development

MBTA Communities Working Group





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TONIGHT'S MEETING

Goals & Objectives

TONIGHT'S MEETING

- Welcome
- MBTA Communities (Section 3a) Legislation and Guidelines
- Survey Results
- Review Draft Map
- Table Group Activity
- Report Out

REMINDER: WHY SECTION 3A MATTERS

By allowing multifamily housing near transit or services, we can accomplish goals laid out in several recent plans*.

The result is



Participation in State's fossil fuel free demonstration pilot (approved by 92% of Town Meeting Members)



Better access to work, services, and other destinations by increasing mobility and utilization of public transit



More housing closer to the places that we go every day, such as local shops, jobs, schools, restaurants, parks, etc.



Increased demand for locally-serving retail and transit services in walkable neighborhoods



Reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles, which helps our larger effort to confront the climate crisis



Housing choice for empty nesters who want to downsize, adult children who want to live in town, first-time homeowners, etc.

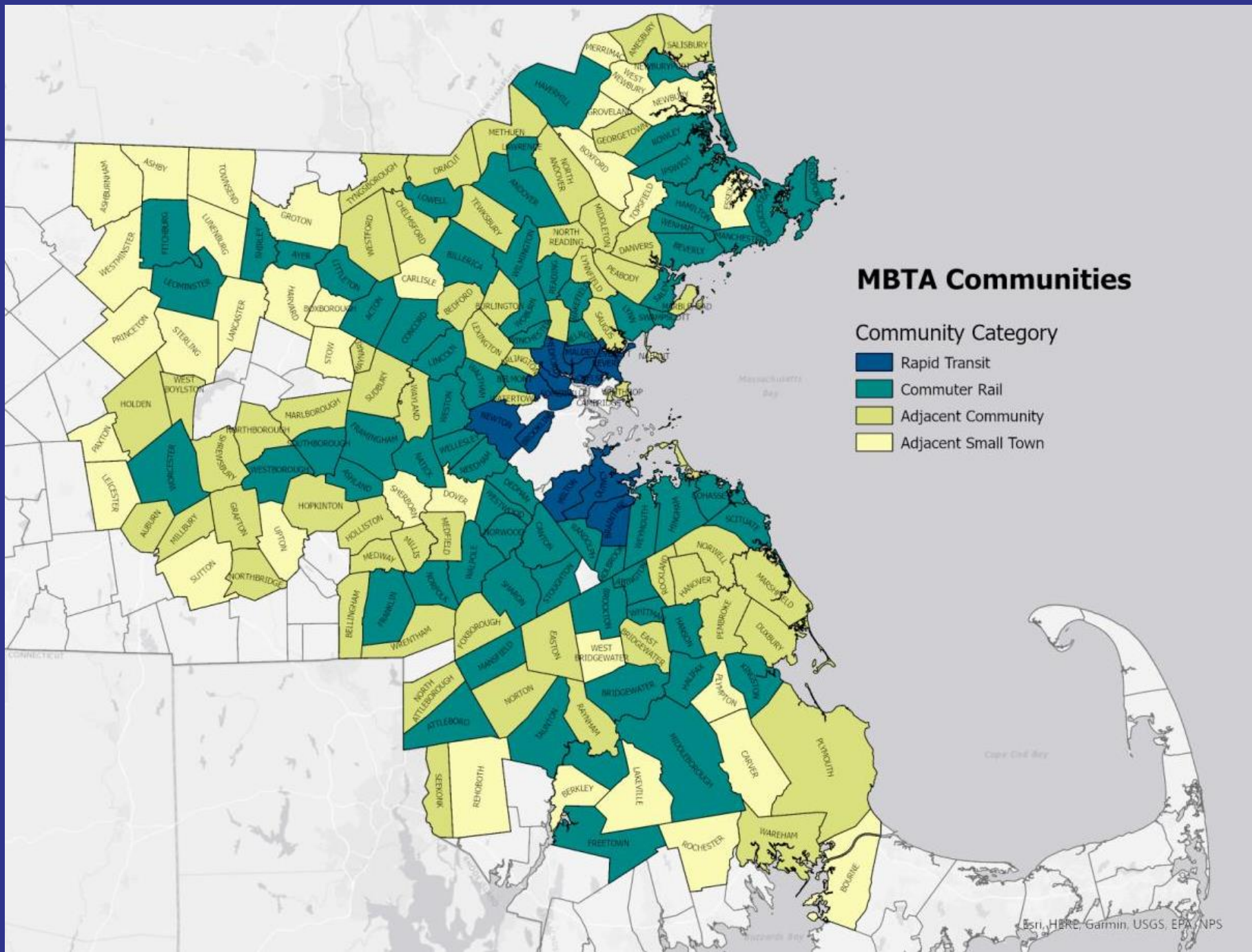
* Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Net Zero Action Plan, Connect Arlington, Fair Housing Action Plan, Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan



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LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

A refresher on our Section 3A assignment



MGL C.40A SECTION 3A

GUIDELINES FOR ARLINGTON

At least one district
of reasonable size



Minimum 32 acres

Multifamily housing permitted
as of right



Building with 3+ residential
dwelling units

No age restrictions; suitable for families with
children



No age restrictions or bedroom
limits in zoning

Minimum gross density of 15 units/acre



Minimum capacity of 2,046 units

Not more than ½ miles from a subway station
or bus station,
if applicable



District(s) must be at least 5 contiguous acres;
location unrestricted, but recommended
location along transit corridors and commercial
centers

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

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Community categories

2

Capacity

3

“Reasonable size”
criteria

4

District location

5

Incentives*

*Not entirely a component of
DHCD guidelines

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



Community categories



Capacity



“Reasonable size”
criteria



District location



Incentives*



Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

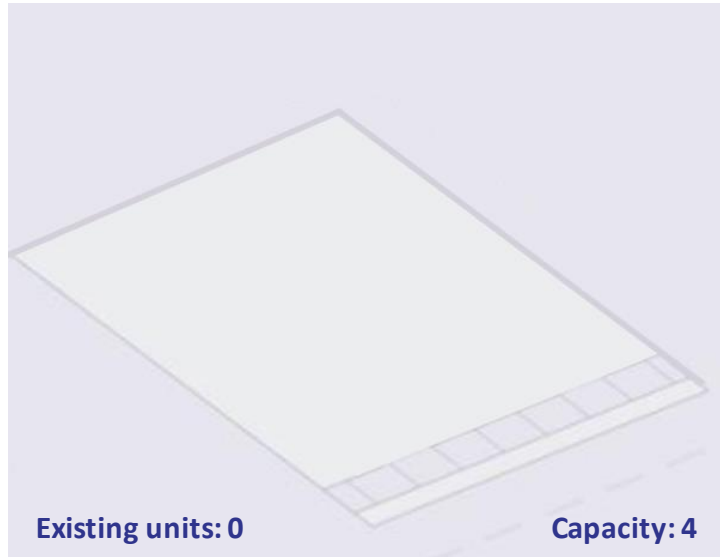


CORE CONCEPT: “CAPACITY”

Existing use: duplex



Treat or count as an undeveloped parcel

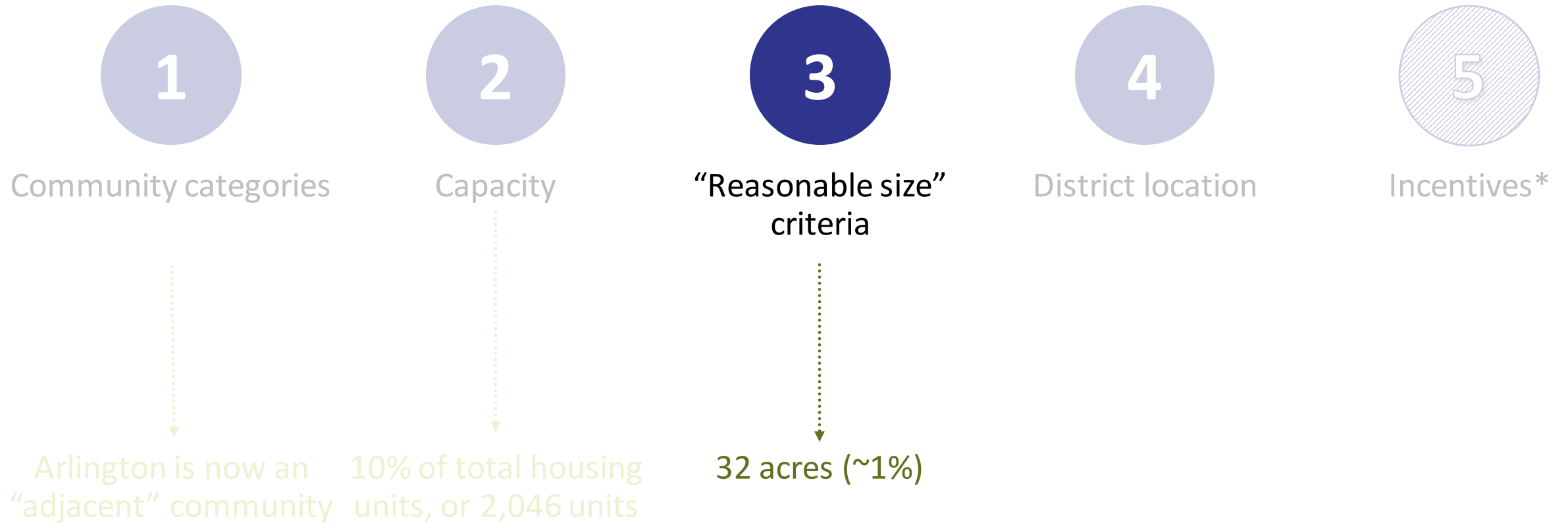


Evaluate for what could be built by right under zoning: fourplex



IMPORTANT! To determine the unit capacity of a new or existing multi-family zoning district, you do not “count” existing units—you instead determine how many multi-family units the zoning district would allow by right on that parcel if it were undeveloped.

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

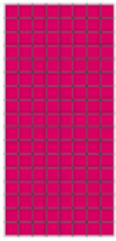


CORE CONCEPT: “REASONABLE SIZE”

Arlington's
minimum district
sizes (to scale; 1 box
= 1 acre)



32 acres



136 acres

Smaller districts /
higher density

Larger districts /
lower density



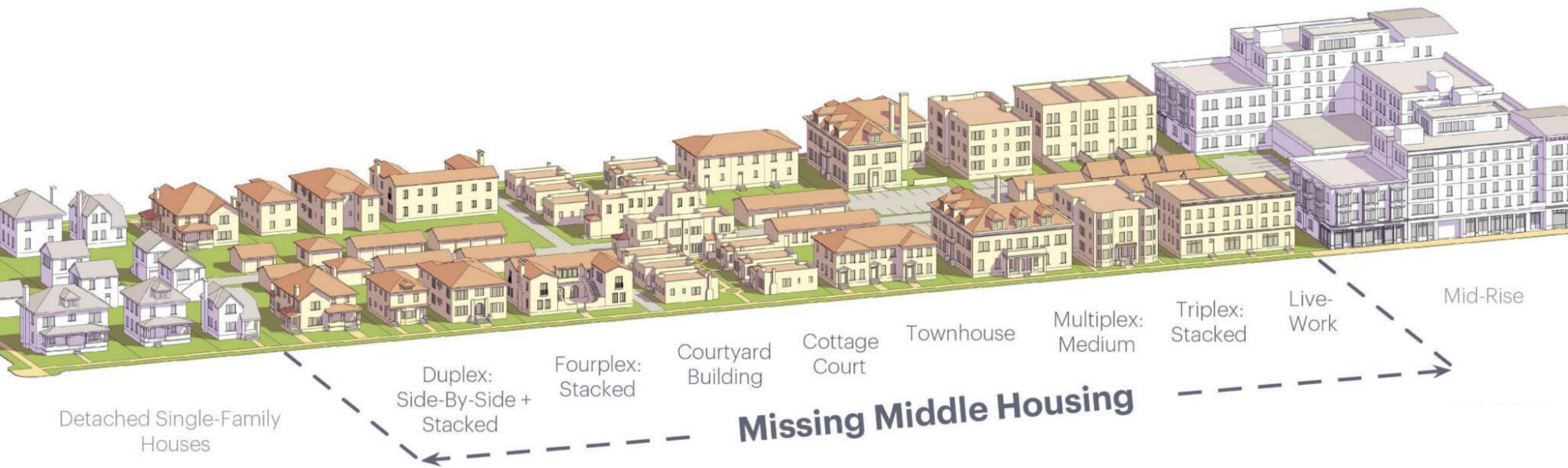
CORE CONCEPT: VISUALIZING DENSITY

lower density

higher density

15 dwelling units/acre

65 dwelling units/acre



CORE CONCEPT: VISUALIZING DENSITY

Triple Decker
3 units
Gross density: 11-30 du/acre



Fourplex: Stacked
4 units
Gross density: 14-22 du/acre



Multiplex building
5-16 units
Gross density: 10-50 du/acre



Courtyard building
6-25 units
Gross density: 21-56 du/acre



YOUR DENSITY AND YOU



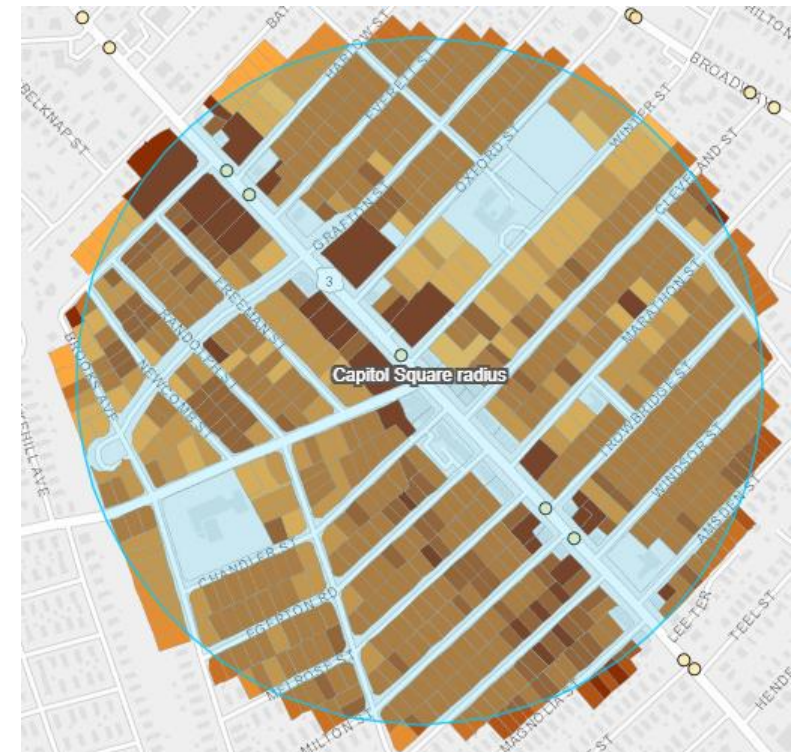
Arlington Heights

10.34 DU/acre



Arlington Center

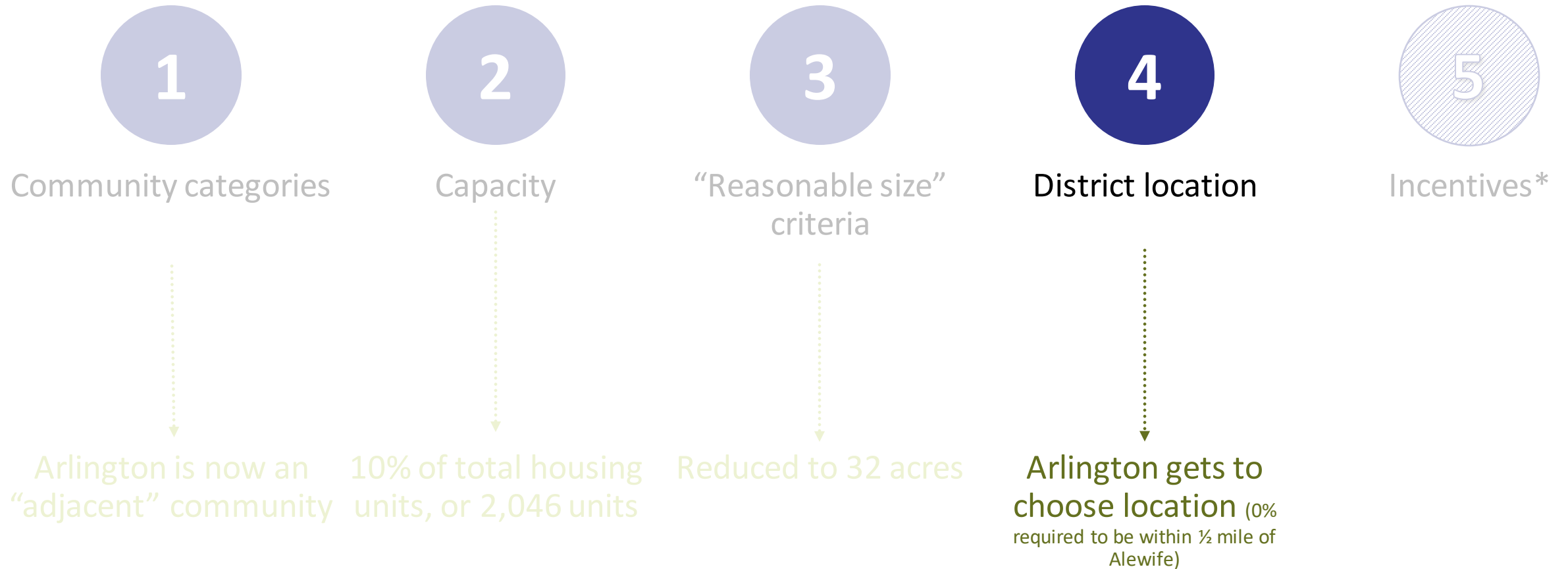
11.48 DU/acre



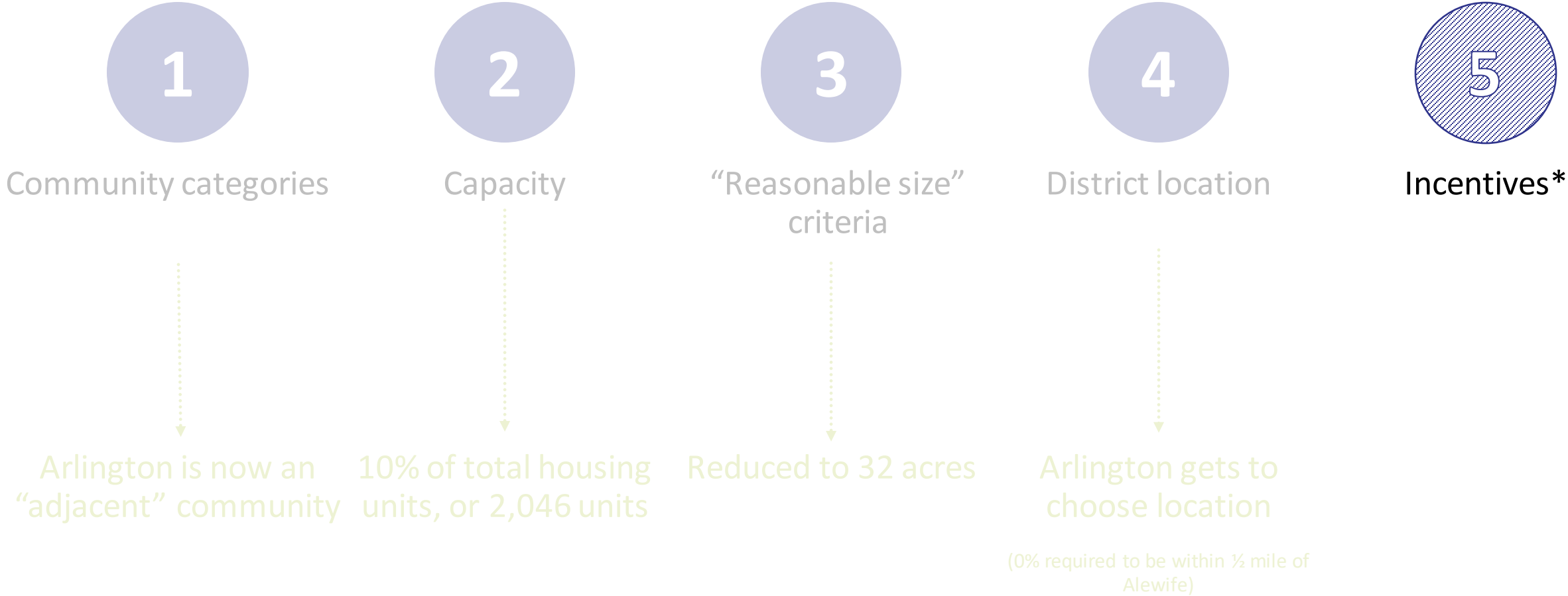
Capitol Square

14.37 DU/acre

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



CORE CONCEPT: INCENTIVES

By complying with MBTA
Communities legislation, Arlington
would remain eligible for funding
from...

... and, if zoning is adopted this fall,
can participate in



MassWorks Infrastructure Program



Housing Choice Initiative



Local Capital Projects Fund



MA Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program

CORE CONCEPT: OBLIGATION

“The Massachusetts Antidiscrimination Law and Federal Fair Housing Act prohibit towns and cities from using their zoning power for a discriminatory purpose or with discriminatory effect.”



3/15/2023 – Attorney General Advisory Concerning Enforcement of MBTA Communities Zoning Law



All MBTA Communities must comply with the law. Communities that fail to comply with the law may be subject to civil enforcement action.



MBTA Communities cannot avoid their obligation under the law by foregoing this funding.



Failure to comply with the law risk liability under federal and state fair housing laws



The Law requires that MBTA Communities “shall have” a compliant zoning district and does not provide any mechanism by which a town or city may opt out of this requirement.



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SURVEY RESULTS

Summarizing your feedback

FIRST MBTA COMMUNITIES SURVEY

Objective

- To solicit residents' input on:
 - (a) where districts should be located
 - (b) secondary goals to consider. Respondents were asked to provide feedback on 13 different visions and priorities for Arlington.

What was the response?

- Survey open from Mar 14 - Apr 17, 2023. 1,033 people responded, including 2,235 comments from 506 different individuals.
- Largest one-day response was Apr 13 (243 responses) after a call for participation was sent to the Town Meeting Members announcement list.

COMMUNITY VISION AND PRIORITIES

Neighborhood Amenities

- Public transportation routes
- Walkable and bikeable areas
- Creating new affordable housing
- Encouraging mixed use
- Incorporating sustainable principles
- Proximity to shared community spaces
- Vitality of commercial centers

Proximity/location

- Multi-family housing on commercial corridors
- Multifamily housing in commercial centers
- Multifamily housing near commercial corridors
- Avoiding flood prone areas
- On large parcels
- In all neighborhoods of Arlington

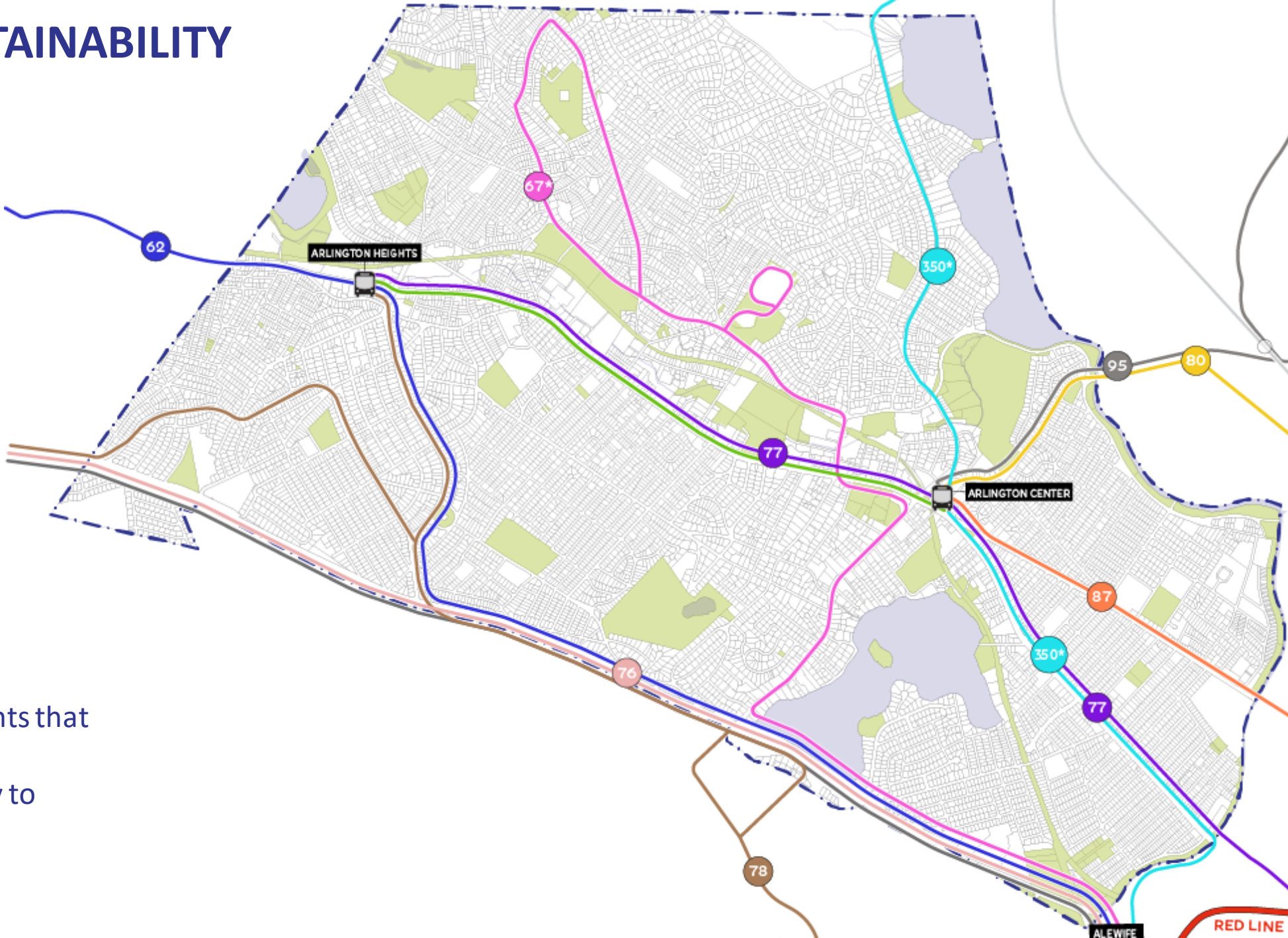
SURVEY RESULTS - SUSTAINABILITY

Strategy/Goal	Support*
Integrating sustainable principles	87%
Encouraging multi-family housing near public transit	76%
Encouraging multi-family housing in walkable and bikeable locations	73%
Avoiding flood-prone areas	68%

*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or “Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

VISUALIZING SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

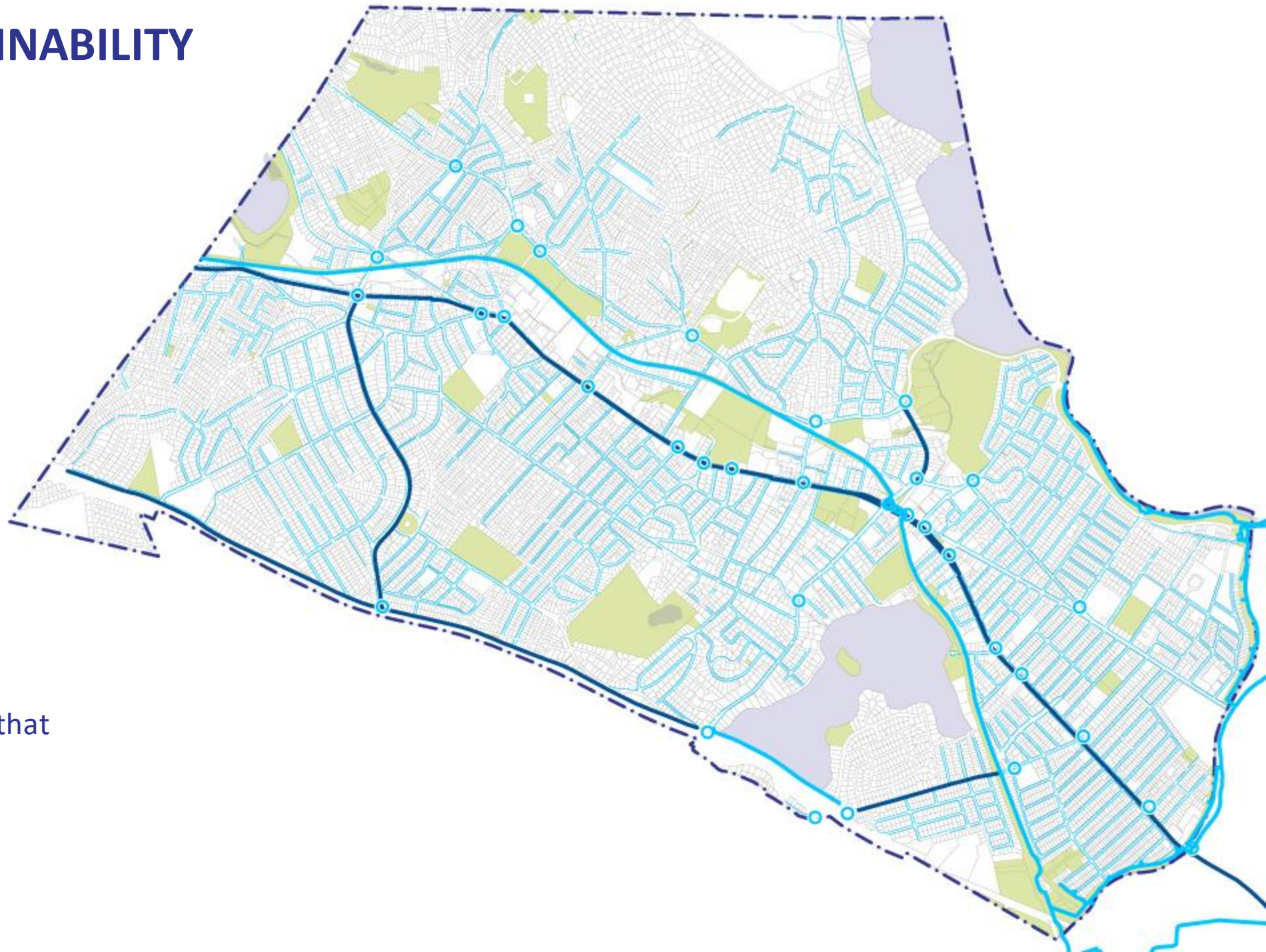
76% of survey respondents support multi-family housing near public transit



*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or “Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

VISUALIZING SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

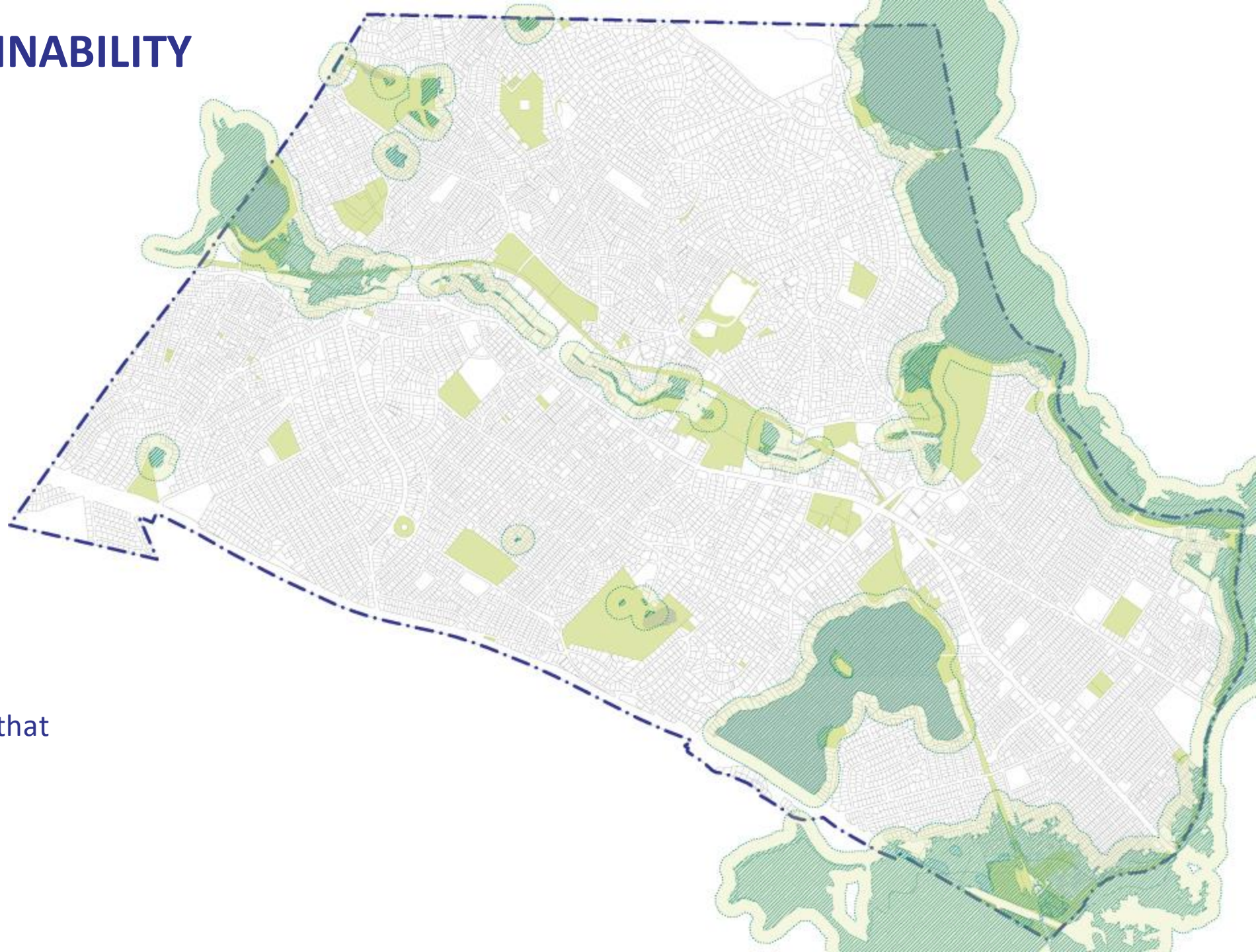
73% of survey respondents support multi-family housing in walkable and bikeable locations



*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or “Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

VISUALIZING SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

68% of survey respondents support avoiding flood-prone areas



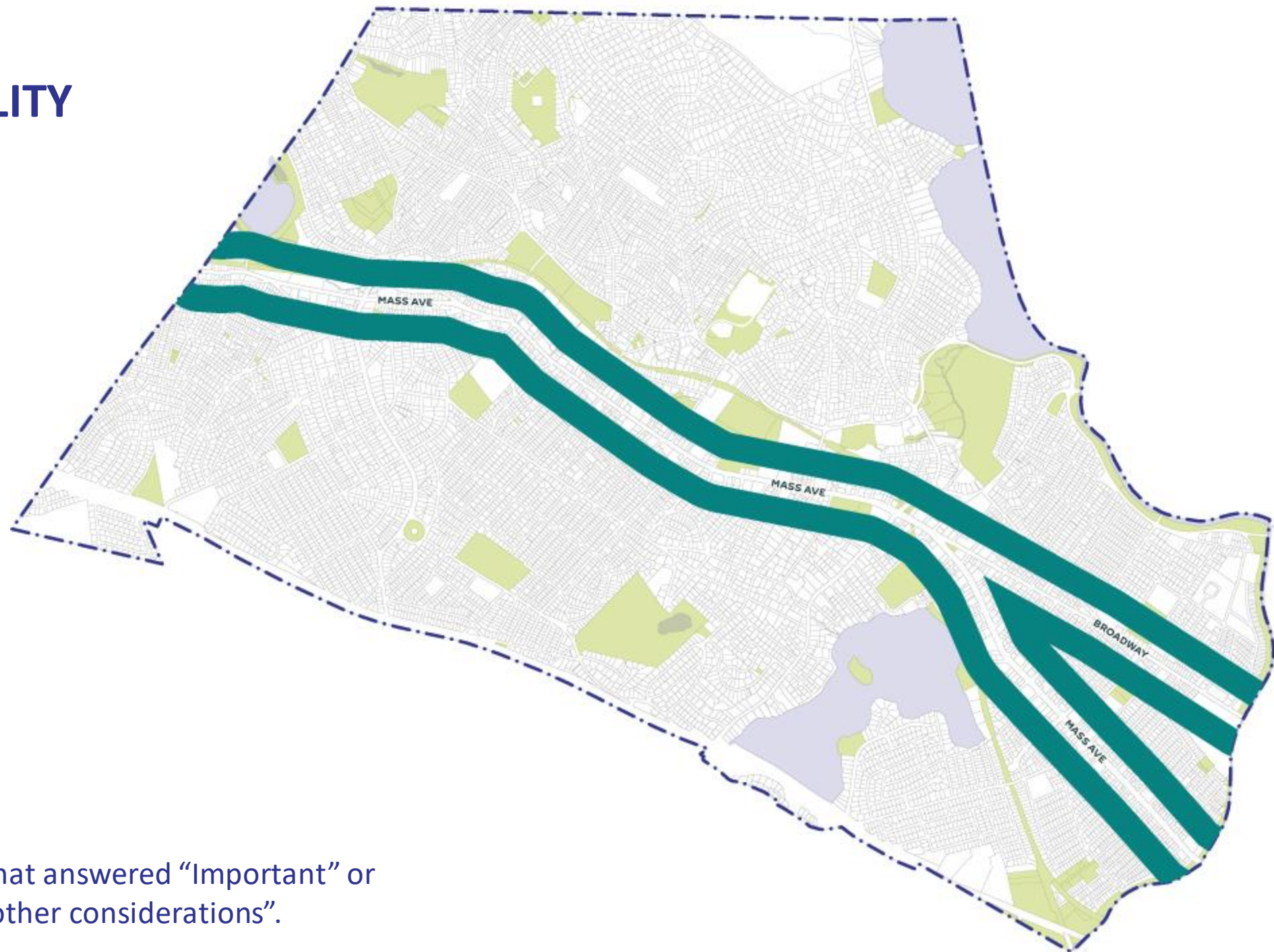
*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or “Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

SURVEY RESULTS – COMMERCIAL VITALITY

Strategy/Goal	Support
Promoting development and vitality of commercial centers	82%
Encouraging multi-family housing that includes mixed uses	71%
Encouraging multi-family housing near commercial corridors	63%
Encouraging multi-family housing along commercial corridors	60%
Encouraging multi-family housing in commercial centers	60%

VISUALIZING COMMERCIAL VITALITY PRIORITIES

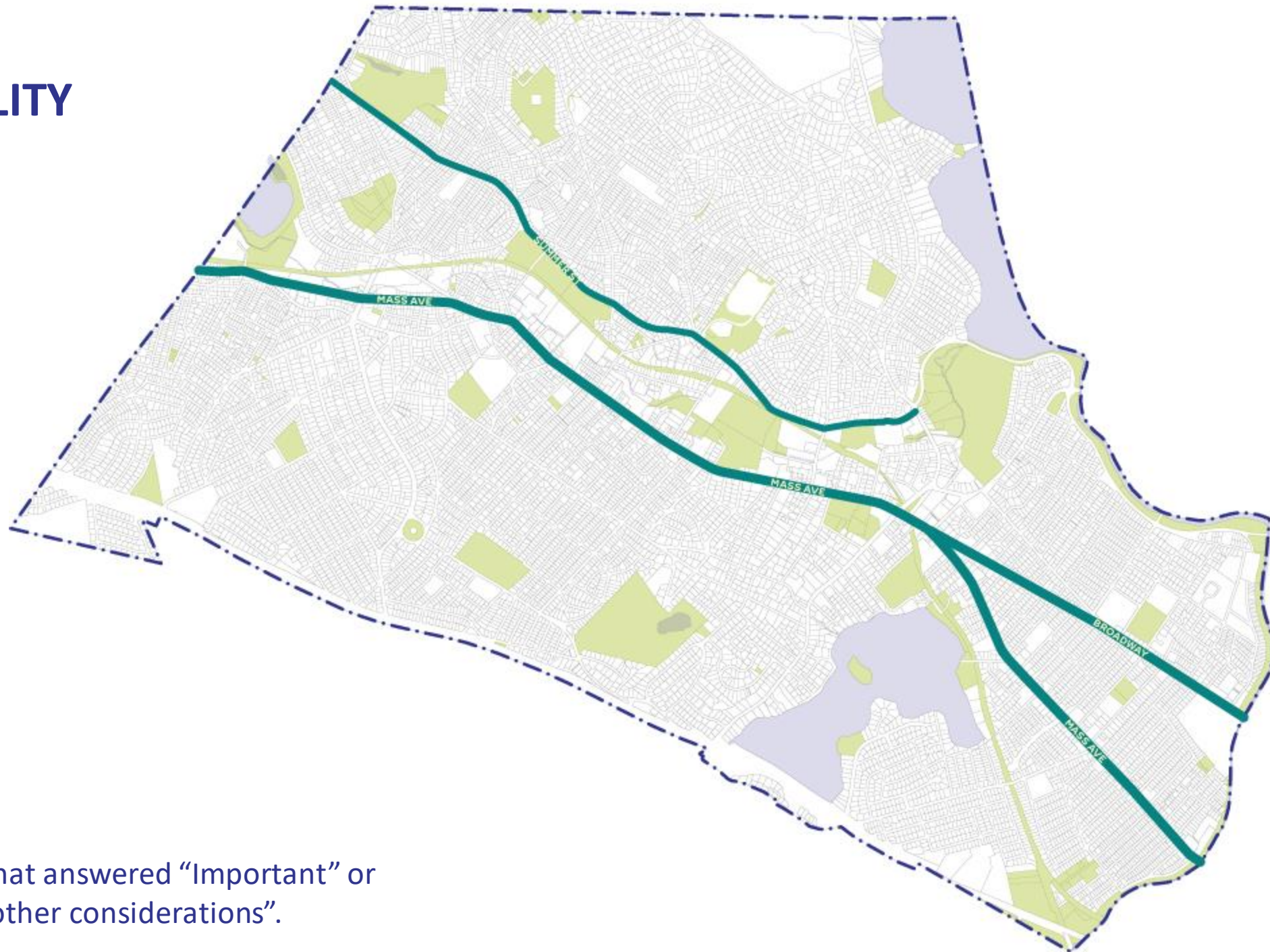
63% of survey
respondents support
multi-family housing
near commercial
corridors



*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or “Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

VISUALIZING COMMERCIAL VITALITY PRIORITIES

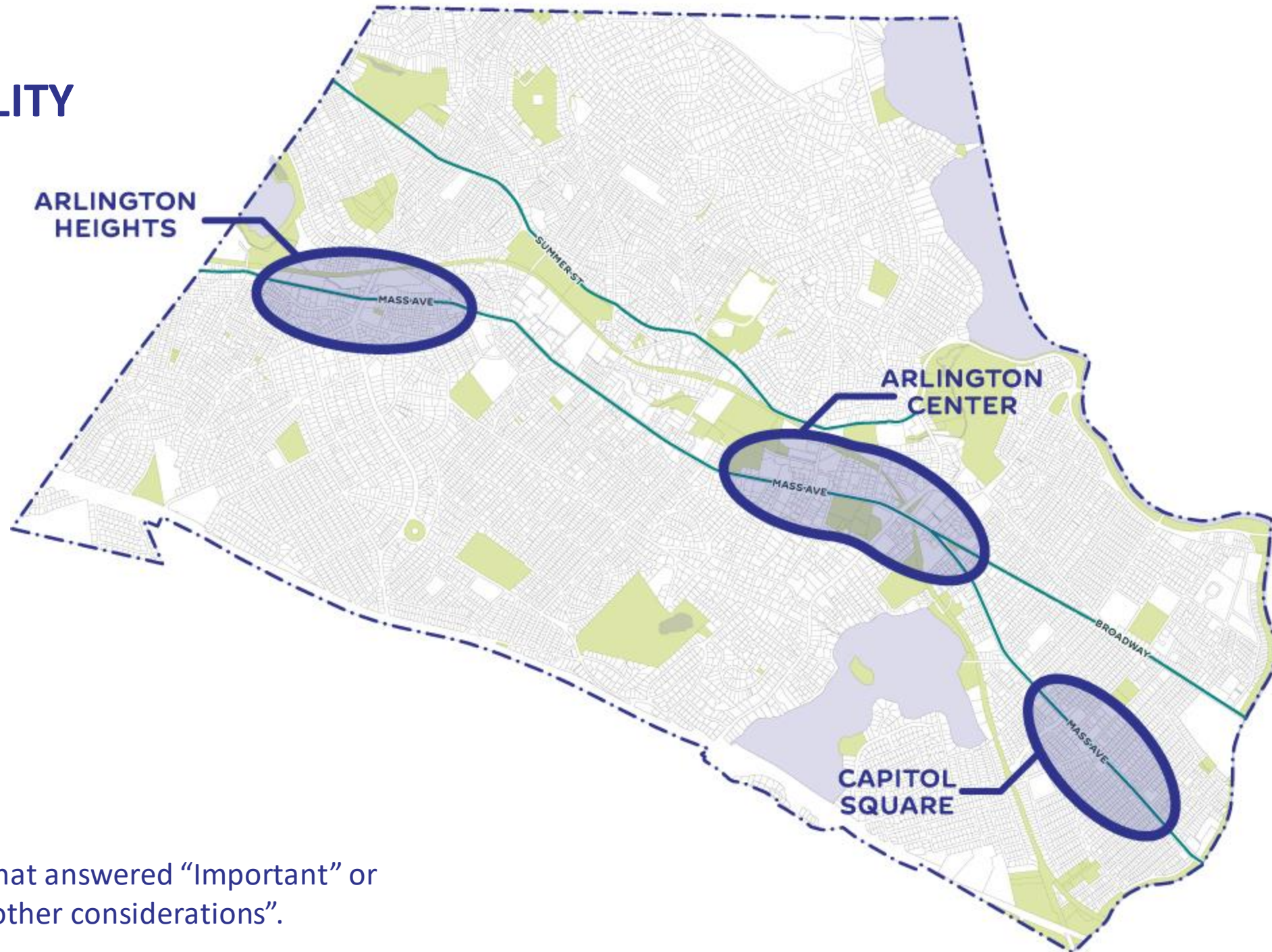
60% of survey
respondents support
multi-family housing
along commercial
corridors



*Support = % of respondents that answered “Important” or
“Important, but secondary to other considerations”.

VISUALIZING COMMERCIAL VITALITY PRIORITIES

60% of survey respondents support multi-family housing in commercial centers



*Support = % of respondents that answered "Important" or "Important, but secondary to other considerations".

SURVEY RESULTS – OTHER PRIORITIES

Strategy/Goal	Support
Providing access to shared community spaces	80%
Encouraging multi-family housing that includes affordable units	77%
Encouraging multi-family housing in all neighborhoods	55%
Encouraging multi-family housing on existing large parcels	46%



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DRAFT MAP

Visualizing Our Priorities

FRAMING THE MAP

THIS DRAFT MAP PRIORITIZES...

- Sustainability
- Commercial vitality & access
- Walkable & bikeable locations
- Proximity to transit
- Avoiding floodplains
- Avoiding anything currently zoned open space



DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION | 6/7/23

Draft MBTA Communities District Concept

- Arlington Center Subdistrict Concept
- Capitol Square Subdistrict Concept
- Arlington Heights Subdistrict Concept

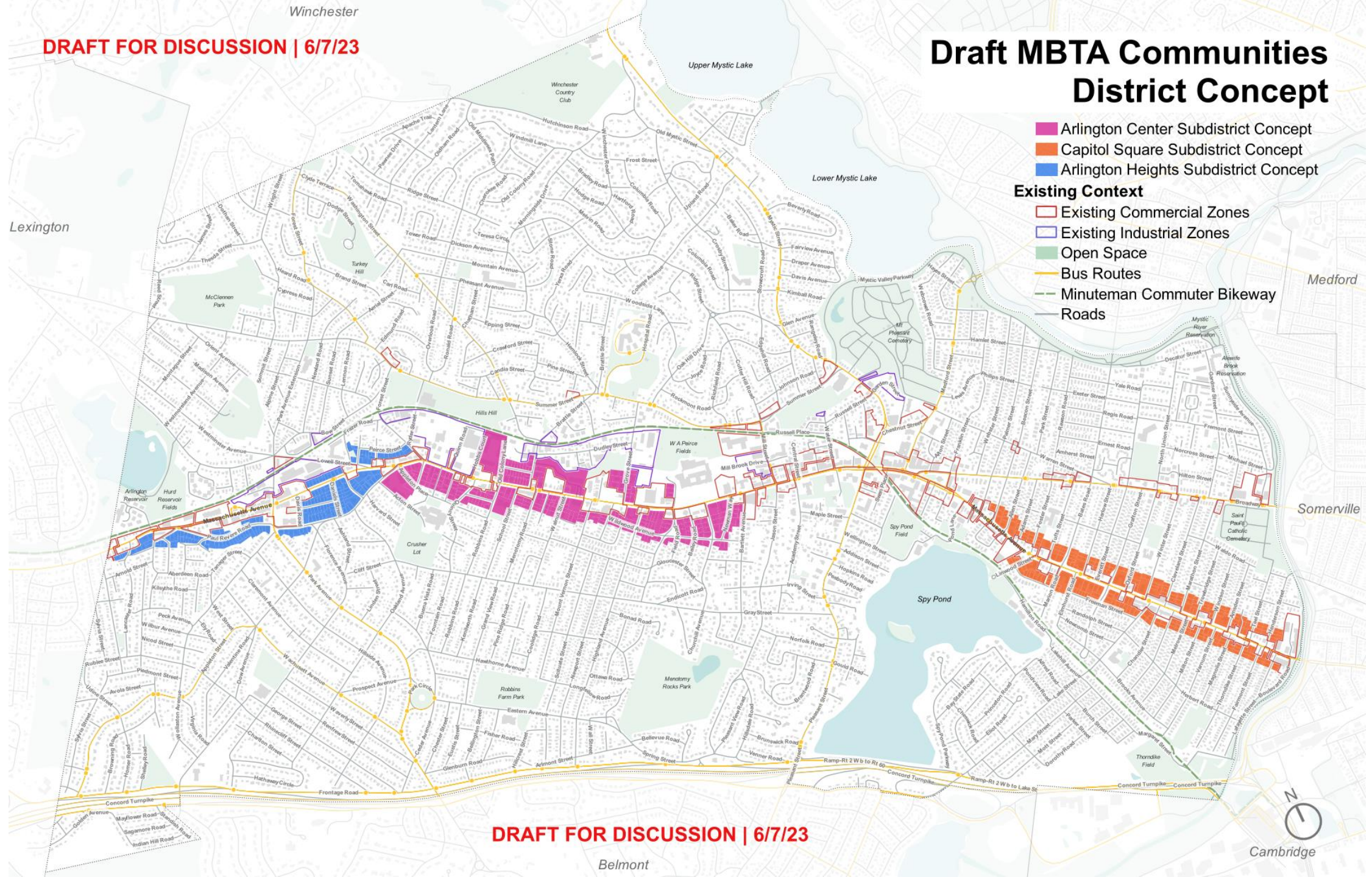
Existing Context

- Existing Commercial Zones
- Existing Industrial Zones
- Open Space
- Bus Routes
- Minuteman Commuter Bikeway
- Roads

Lexington

Medford

Somerville



DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION | 6/7/23

Belmont

Cambridge



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Table Group Activity

Discussing Our Choices

GROUP ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Tonight, we need your help considering a) the size and scale of multi-family housing; and b) how this zoning should relate to our Commercial and Industrial zones.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- At your tables, read and discuss the two questions provided.
- Please help your facilitator to capture ideas and questions; the large map and the notes will be provided to the Working Group to inform and direct our next steps.
- Pick a spokesperson to report out from your table with 1 point of agreement in your group and 1 point your group is still discussing.
- We will reconvene as a large group at about **8:40 p.m.** to report back.

GROUP ACTIVITY NORMS



- Be present, presume welcome and extend welcome
- Listen with the intent to understand, not necessarily to respond
- Speak for yourself and speak your truth in ways that respect others' truths (use "I" statements)
- Suspend judgment
- Take space, make space
- Agree to engage in polite constructive/productive dialogue and feedback
- Expect and accept a lack of closure
- When things get difficult, turn to wonder.



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REPORT OUT

Key takeaways from group activity

REPORT OUT INSTRUCTIONS

A spokesperson from each group shares:

- One point of agreement
- One point you're still discussing

Please wait to speak until a staff member brings a microphone to you and please keep your comments brief (~1 minute).



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THANK YOU AND GOODNIGHT

Comment form will be available at www.tinyurl.com/MBTACommunitiesArlington

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